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we as a democracy insist on strong executive leadership? Shall we so organize that our Executive can effectively direct and use all the forces and reserves of the nation for common welfare ends—be they the ends of peace or of war?" "Can we and our Allies so far adapt and tune up our political machinery that we may demonstrate in actual competition with Prussian autocracy an efficiency that is adequate for self-protection and at the same time make it consistent with the aims and purposes of democracy?" The author answers his question in the affirmative, and the reader can not afford to overlook his answer.

D. D. LESCOHIER

The county. The "dark continent" of American politics. By H. S. Gilbertson. (New York: National short ballot organization, 1917. 297 p.)

In this severe but just indictment of county government Mr. Gilbertson has unquestionably struck at the most vulnerable spot of what remains of inefficiency in American political life. He presents an array of convincing data to show the existence of a "very real and very important problem." He not only states the problem but explains its origin and suggests the lines along which a satisfactory solution may be attempted. To furnish the requisite historical background the author sketches the development of colonial county types, the establishment of "safe guards against tyranny" by the extension of the elective principle, the inevitable loss of popular control and consequent debasement of the county by the spoils politician. The story is familiar enough to those who have interested themselves in the evolution of local political institutions. Its significance lies in the fact that the county remains unredeemed while the city has been making remarkable strides toward political regeneration.

The short ballot is the *sine qua non* of redemption. More definitely, however, the author suggests certain broad outlines of a program for revitalizing the county. He recommends the elimination of urban counties, greater centralization of state administration to relieve the county of work it can no longer perform efficiently, home rule with respect to internal organization, an elective council chosen as local experiences and needs dictate, a responsible executive resembling the city mayor or preferably manager, and the various financial reforms that have had so conspicuous a place in recent municipal betterment. There is a splendid bibliography. Constitutional and charter provisions for county home rule in California and the New York proposals of 1916 are included as appendices.

C. O. GARDNER